A VINDICATION OF Infant Baptiſm,

From the FOUR Chief

OBJECTIONS

Brought Againſt it, *Viz:*

I. From the Natural Incapacity of Infants.
II. From their not actually Believing.
III. From the Want of an expreſs Command to Baptize them.
IV. From the Want of Scripture-Precedents for it.

In a LETTER to Mr. ****.

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A VINDICATION OF Infant Baptiſm, &c.

SIR,

IT is now ſome conſiderable Time ſince you and I occaſionally reviving ſome former Diſcourſe, that had paſs'd between us, about the Difference in our Perſuaſions: You deſir'd to ſee my Arguments, and to conſider them at your Leiſure. I have now comply'd with that Requeſt, but ſaw it neceſſary before I could do ſo, to enlarge and illuſtrate them a little, that they might come cloſer to many of thoſe Scruples which I found ſometimes alledged in theſe Controverſies. If I give this as one Reaſon of my not complying ſooner with your Deſire, though I had other Reaſons for this Delay; yet you are ſenſible how juſt an Excuſe I have, in the few Minutes I can ſpare from the conſtant Engagement of my daily Buſineſs. You'll, perhaps, ask why I now ſend you this in Print, which I once ſeem'd to be averſe to. But when I found you called in Mr. *A*— to anſwer my Argument from the 1 *Cor.* 7. 14. I apprehended the Debate might not continue between you and me alone; and therefore thought it better to ſubmit to the Cenſure of the World, than to part with my Papers into private Hands, where the Deſign of them might be miſtaken. I have carefully avoided all undue Reflections upon either Perſons or Parties; hoping thereby that I ſhould make no Man my Enemy by a candid Defence of what I firmly believe to be agreeable to the Laws of God and Chriſt; and being deſirous whatever Difference there may be in our Perſuaſions; to obſerve ſtrictly all Rules of Chriſtian Charity, Love and Friendſhip. I'll detain you no longer in the Way of Preface, but beg you fairly to conſider the following Arguments.

CHAP. I.

THE moſt conſiderable Objections that I have yet met with againſt the Baptiſm of Infants, are theſe Four:

I. It is pleaded, that it is an unreaſonable Practice, in that Infants are not capable of knowing any Thing of the Covenant into which they are admitted by it.

II. That it is contrary to the Inſtitution of our Saviour, which, you ſay, requiring Perſons to be firſt Inſtructed before Baptized, thereby excludes Infants as incapable of that Antecedent Inſtruction.

III. That it is an unwarrantable, and unlawful Practice, in that there is no Precept, nor Command, nor Autority for it in all the Word of GOD.

IV. *and Laſtly*, That there is no mention at all made of ſuch Practice in all the NEW TESTAMENT.

Now if it be made appear, that none of theſe Objections have any juſt Force in them, this, I think, will be ſufficient to vindicate the Church of *England*, in retaining this Ancient and Pious Practice.

1. The Firſt Objection is, That it is an unreaſonable Practice, in that Infants are not capable of knowing any Thing of the Covenant; The Want of which Knowledge, and the Incapacity thereupon, is thought to make their Baptiſm unreaſonable and abſurd. But if all other Objections have no more Force than this, they will admit of a very quick Diſpatch.

1. In that it is not at all diſagreeable to the Reaſon of Mankind for Infants to be bound in Covenants, to the future Performance of Conditions; which they at preſent know nothing at all of, nor can be capable of performing, till they come to Age. This is common among Men, and practiſed almoſt every Day. Every Will, and every Conditional Settlement of an Eſtate on Heirs, is a Covenant: And every Contract that a Guardian makes for a Minor, is made in that Infant's Name, and he is bound by it, and really enjoyns the Benefits of it, in Expectation of a future Performance of the Conditions by him. And Baptiſm is only the Seal of a Covenant or Contract between God and Man: Why then ſhould it be thought ſtrange, or incredible, that God ſhould thus deal with us in a Diſpenſation of Grace and Mercy?

2. If

2. If the Incapacity of Infants were in the Nature of Things a neceſſary Bar, it muſt be an Univerſal and Indiſpenſable One, and muſt exclude Infants from all Covenants with God whatever, whether of Works, or of Grace; whether by the Law, or by the Goſpel. For what ariſes abſolutely from the Nature of Things, muſt needs be Univerſal, and Perpetual; and muſt have always the ſame Influence.

But that the Incapacity of Infants is not an Univerſal and Perpetual Bar to all Covenants, our Adverſaries themſelves, I hope, will grant; in that Infants were admitted into a Covenant with God under the Law. If then God admits Infants into a Covenant under the Law; he may do ſo under the Goſpel too, if he pleaſes. And if God may do ſo, it can be neither Improper nor Unreaſonable, nor in the Nature of Things Abſurd. The Difference in the Conditions or Subſtance of the Covenant makes nothing in the Caſe; the one being Law, the other Goſpel, the one of Works and the other of Grace, is nothing to the Purpoſe; becauſe Infants are equally incapable of underſtanding both. And where the whole Streſs lies in the Incapacity of the Subject, it muſt have as much Force in the One as in the Other. If it be ſaid God may admit them but does not: This is running before-hand to a new Objection, that ſhall be conſidered in its proper place. The only Thing now in debate is, whether the Natural Incapacity of Infancy be in it ſelf a neceſſary Bar; if it be, this muſt be alledged as an univerſal Obſtacle to all Covenants as well as to this; we plainly ſee that it is not an univerſal Obſtacle, becauſe God hath admitted them into Covenant with him, and bound them to the Performance of Conditions by that Covenant; Therefore this Objection is of no Force, in that it does not neceſſarily conclude. Mr. *Keach*, p. 85. This, indeed, ſome of your Perſuaſion ſeem to grant.

If then the Incapacity of Infants is not in the Nature of Things a Neceſſary and Univerſal Bar to all Covenants in general: I am to enquire whether there be any thing in the Chriſtian Covenant peculiarly that excludes them from thence.

CHAP. II.

THE Second Objection is, That Infants as incapable of underſtanding the Covenant, and believing and repenting; are by our Saviour's Inſtitution Prohibited and Excluded from Baptiſm; for, ſay you, the Apoſtles were to make Diſciples by Inſtruction before they were to Baptize them. Matt. 28. 19. *Go, teach all Nations, and* then *Baptize them.*

them. And Mark 16. 15, 16. *He that beleiveth and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved.* This, ſay you, is the *great Charter of the Goſpel, which requiring Perſons that are to be baptized, to be firſt made Diſciples by Inſtruction and Believing: Does in ſo doing, exclude all that cannot be taught and believe?*

I anſwer, In this Commiſſion Chriſt had a more peculiar Regard to the Perſons to whom the Apoſtles were firſt and more immediately ſent; who were, indeed, Men and Women; and therefore he mentions ſuch Qualifications antecedent to Baptiſm, as in Reaſon and the Nature of Things were indiſpenſably neceſſary, conſidering the State of the World at that time. Men were almoſt univerſally revolted into Idolatry, Ignorance, Superſtition, Profaneneſs, and other great Iniquities. And with theſe Qualifications it was not fit they ſhould be admitted into a Covenant of Grace and Reconciliation with God. Theſe were therefore firſt to be Converted and Reclaimed, and then Baptized. And this was the great Work to which the Apoſtles are here Commiſſioned. Now, if from hence you argue, that none ought to be baptized but thoſe only who are thus taught and made Diſciples by actual Belief: I muſt beg leave to ask, how you reconcile your Belief of Infants Salvation with theſe Texts? For they as much exclude Infants from Salvation, as from Baptiſm. I do not ask how Infants ſhall be ſaved; for in anſwer to that, you will ſay; *Secret Things belong to God.* But I ask, how you who do believe and confeſs that Infants may and ſhall be ſaved, do reconcile that Opinion with theſe Texts, and particularly with that of St. *Mark*, which does by the ſame Conſequence prove, that Infants cannot be ſaved as that Infants ought not to be baptized. For obſerve the Argument, Chriſt ſays, Matt. 28. 19. *Go make Diſciples of all Nations and baptize them.* And Mark 16. 15, 16. *Preach the Goſpel to every Creature, he that believeth and is baptized ſhall be ſaved, and he that believeth not ſhall be damned:* From whence you argue thus; None are to be baptized but thoſe who are firſt made Diſciples by believing; but Infants are not capable of believing; therefore they ought not to be Baptized. Now in the very ſame Manner one may argue thus, That Infants ſhall not be ſaved. *He that believeth not ſhall be damned*; Infants are not capable of Believing, *Ergo*, Infants muſt all be damned. This is juſt the ſame Way of Arguing without any Difference at all. How will you anſwer this? Will you ſet up for this Peice of Cruelty, that all Infants are damned? If not; you muſt ſay here as we do concerning Baptiſm: That theſe Texts are improperly and impertinently alledged in the Caſe of Infants; becauſe they were never intended to extend to them. Otherwiſe, they will as certainly conclude againſt the Salvation of Infants, as againſt the Baptiſm of them, in that Faith and Repentance are as neceſſary to the one, as to the other.

The

The Matter then, in ſhort, is this; Men and Women were firſt of all to be made Diſciples by a Saving Faith; the Caſe of Children was a diſtinct Caſe to be conſidered afterwards; when their Parents had been firſt converted: And tho' believing was neceſſary in the Parents to be before their Baptiſm, yet this does not prove that their Infants were to be excluded from the Sacrament, becauſe they could not actually believe.

But you'll reply, is not Faith then neceſſarily required of Perſons to be baptized? I anſwer; Where the Apoſtles found Infidelity and Iniquity, they were neceſſarily to preach Faith and Repentance before they baptized. But the Scripture intimates, that the Innocence of harmleſs Babes (whoſe original Guilt is done away by Chriſt) and who never offended him by any actual Tranſgreſſion, is as pleaſing to God, and as agreeable a Qualification for the Admiſſion into a Covenant of Grace and Mercy, and ſealing that Covenant by the Sacrament of Baptiſm; as either the Faith of the actual Believer, or the Repentance of the Penitent. Chriſt has ſaid of us all, That *unleſs we become as little Children*, Mat. 18. 3. that is, for their lovely Innocence, *we ſhall in no wiſe enter into the Kingdom of God*. I do not argue whether he ſpake this with a particular Reſpect to the Baptiſm of Infants or no. I urge not that: But I ſpeak of the Qualifications that recommend us to God's Favour and Mercy: And Chriſt does here declare, That their Innocence is as grateful to him, as any Man's Faith and Repentance: And for this Reaſon, they ought not to be excluded.

The Truth of what I now maintain, I think, is ſufficiently prov'd from the very Nature of this Sacrament. Baptiſm, as I underſtand it, is a Seal for the Confirmation of that Covenant which God has made with Mankind in *Jeſus Chriſt*; and that Covenant is on God's Part a free Promiſe, and Engagement to grant Mercy, and Salvation through the Blood of Chriſt, to All, whoſe actual Sins do not render them incapable of, and exclude them from it. From whence I argue thus; Thoſe that are not in a State of actual Sin, are capable of being admitted into this Covenant, and thereby entitled to the Promiſes; for nothing but Sin made us at firſt obnoxious to Death, and nothing but the Guilt of Sin can exclude us from eternal Life: And thoſe that are capable of being admitted into the Covenant, and entitled to the Promiſes, are capable of that Sacrament which is the Seal of it. This, I think, is a good Concluſion. Infants therefore, tho' by Nature born in Sin, yet being reconcil'd to God, I don't ſay by Baptiſm, but by the Blood of *Jeſus Chriſt*, are capable of Admiſſion into the Covenant by Baptiſm, which is the Seal of it, tho' they do not actually believe. For this Reaſon it is,

that

that the Church of *England* has ſo judiciouſly declar'd, That *Infants baptized, and dying before they commit any actual Tranſgreſſion, are undoubtedly ſaved.* For, dying in a State of Reconciliation, and having the Promiſes of God confirmed by this Seal: They are ſafe, having not by any actual Violation of the Covenant forfeited the Claim. This I cannot but think a reaſonable Way of Arguing from the Nature of this Sacrament and Covenant: And if it be, theſe Texts do not exclude Infants, either directly, or by Conſequence.

And, methinks, it ſavours of Raſhneſs and Inconſideration, to think, that becauſe God has required Faith, and Repentance of Men in a State of Sin, and under the Power of abominable Luſts; and conſequently, altogether unfit to be admitted into Covenant till they abjure their Idolatry, and abandon their Vices: That therefore innocent Babes who never offended ſhall not be admitted through want of the ſame Qualifications. The different Circumſtances, and Conditions of the Perſons, is a ſufficient Proof that the ſame Qualifications are not neceſſarily required in both. But I foreſee ſome Objections which I will briefly conſider, and then proceed.

1. It is pleaded, that Capacity gives no Right; you may have a capacity to be a Juſtice of Peace, but muſt have a Commiſſion before you ought to act as ſuch. And tho' the Innocence of Babes be thus acceptable to God, and he does for Chriſt's ſake ſave them, yet this will not at all countenance their being baptized; becauſe it is no where commanded. I anſwer, That if this be all, then the Caſe is changed, and the Objection is not that Infants are excluded, but that their Baptiſm is no where commanded. I was only now to prove, that nothing in the Nature of this Sacrament does neceſſarily exclude them. Infants being in a State of Reconciliation and Favour, does, I think, ſufficiently prove that. How far a particular Command is neceſſary to be added to this Capacity, is another Queſtion that ſhall be conſider'd in its place.

2. I may poſſibly be asked, how I reconcile this Doctrine to our *Church-Catechiſm*, which teaches, that *Faith and Repentance are required of Perſons to be Baptized?* Indeed, I think, the Anſwer is eaſie; for the Catechiſm ſpeaks firſt indefinitely, without any reſpect to Adults or Infants, as Chriſt has done in *Matt.* 28. and declares what in general are the Conditions of the Covenant, and conſequently not of this Sacrament only, but of our Salvation alſo: And theſe are Faith, and Repentance, which every one that enters into this Covenant, when they come to Age, are obliged to. But it no where declares, that actual Faith, and actual Repentance are univerſally neceſſary to all Perſons

ſons whatever, that ſhall be admitted to this Sacrament. No, it declares the Contrary; that tho' Infants, *by reaſon of their tender Age, cannot perform* theſe Conditions; yet they are baptized, not upon *their Sureties Faith*, or *believing by Proxy*: But upon the Expectation grounded on their Engagement, that the Children ſhall be taught and exhorted to perform them afterwards. And this, I think, is agreeable to what I have here maintained.

3. It may poſſibly be objected, That if this Doctrine be true, it will from hence follow, that the Infant-Children of *Turks*, *Jews*, and *Pagans* may be as capable of Baptiſm, as the Children of Believers; becauſe they are innocent as well as others, and have their original Guilt as well expiated by the Blood of Chriſt. I anſwer, Infants as to Covenants, and Privileges are reputed in the ſame Eſtate, and Right with their Parents, and that becauſe being under their Tuition its preſumed they will have the ſame Principles and Perſuaſion. And therefore, as the Children of Unbelievers on this account may in ſome Senſe be ſaid to be Partakers of their Parents Infidelity; as they are like to be brought up in it: For this Reaſon they are denied Baptiſm. Otherwiſe they are capable, and may be admitted wherever there is ſufficient Satisfaction given to the Church; that they ſhall be educated in the Chriſtian Religion. And the Reaſon why they are not admitted now, is only on this Account, becauſe it would be prepoſterous to admit Children into a Religion which they were never likely to be inſtructed, and educated in afterwards. But, I ſay, could the Church be aſſur'd, that they would be inſtructed, and educated in that Faith; they alſo might be baptized, and nothing in our Saviour's Commiſſion neceſſarily excludes them.

4. *and Laſtly*, If it be objected, That this Doctrine makes the Baptiſm of Infants unneceſſary, in that if they were in a State of Reconciliation and Favour before Baptiſm; they can profit nothing by being baptized. I anſwer, I did not undertake to prove that the Baptiſm of Infants was abſolutely neceſſary to their Salvation; but that it is lawful, and not at all diſagreeable to Chriſt's Inſtitution; and therefore no juſt Cauſe of the Separation from the Communion of our Church; which is all that I now contend for.

CHAP. III.

THE Third Objection is, That it is an Unwarrantable, and Unlawful Practice to baptize Infants, becauſe there is, you ſay, no *Precept, nor Command, nor Autority for it in all the Word of God:* And this is the Sheet-Anchor on which you lay the greateſt Streſs. For when we can demonſtrate by God's own Autority, and Example, that the natural Incapacity of Infants is no neceſſary Bar to exclude them from the Seal of the Covenant; you reply, all this is nothing, becauſe there was an expreſs and poſitive Command for Circumciſing Infants, but there is none at all for Baptizing them; and when we argue that Faith and Repentance are made as neceſſary to Salvation as they are to Baptiſm; and conſequently do no more exclude Infants from this Sacrament than from Salvation; you plead, that tho' they are capable and within the Covenant of Grace, yet they ought not to be Baptized, becauſe it is not Commanded. In Chriſtianity nothing is to be done without the expreſs Autority of God's Word.

And here you load us with heavy Charges of pretending to take the Word of God for our only Rule of Faith and Manners, and yet to keep Unſcriptural Ordinances, and do that which the whole Word of God ſpeaks not one Word of from the Beginning to the End. So that *we of the Church of* England *are guilty of adding to the Divine Laws of God in the moſt weighty Matters of Chriſtianity without his Autority: Teaching for Doctrine the Commandments of Men.* This is a ſevere Charge, of which if we were indeed guilty, it muſt needs be heavy upon us at the laſt Great Day. And that we may be the better prepared then, let it be conſidered fairly what we have to alledge in our Defence now.

Firſt, This Argument may eaſily be turned upon you; the Baptiſm of Infants, you ſay, is no Goſpel-Ordinance; 'tis not Commanded, and therefore it is unlawful. I reply, 'tis no where forbidden, and therefore it is not unlawful.

And this Argument of no Prohibition is of more than ordinary Force here; in that God all along in both the former Covenants of *Abraham* and *Moſes* having commanded Infants to be admitted, and ſealed by the Sacrament, which was ordained for the Confirmation thereof: When he changed the Ordinance, and inſtituted Baptiſm to be the Seal of his Covenant, it was then proper to have declared, if Infants that were fit Subjects to receive the Seal of it before, ſhould now be excluded.

For

For his having given no expreſs Prohibition, goes a great way to vindicate the Lawfulneſs of this Practice; in that it ſeems to ſhow his Pleaſure, that they ſhould be continued to have the Seal of the Covenant as they had had before. For if ever Prohibition was to be expected, to declare a Thing unlawful; it was to the Aboliſhing a Practice that had been ſo long eſtabliſhed, and received; I mean the admitting Infants into Covenant with him.

2. But *Secondly*, We have the Autority of God for this Practice in two Reſpects. 1. The Autority of his own Example. 2. Of his Command in his revealed Word and Laws.

1. We have the Autority of God's Example for our Warrant in this Practice; and as Mr. *Keach*, I remember, confeſſes, *Page* 35, 36, that an Apoſtolical Practice, or a Goſpel-Precedent is of equal Autority with a Goſpel-Precept: So, I hope, it will be allowed that a Divine Precedent, from the Example of God, is of the ſame Autority alſo, when the Nature of Things, and the Circumſtances are alike.

But before I explain this Argument, I cannot but obſerve to you by that little I have ſeen in theſe Controverſies, that the naming of ſuch an Argument will raiſe ſome Mens Wonder, who being quicker to wrangle about Words than to weigh the Reaſon of Things; will break out into Exclamations, and ſay; *Prove Baptiſm of Infants from the Example of God! Did Chriſt ever baptize an Infant? Is there one Syllable of ſuch a Practice in all Sacred Writ? This muſt be the Old Thred-bare Argument from the Analogy between Baptiſm and Circumciſion. Infants under the Law, or before it were Circumciſed*, Ergo, *they may be Baptized, and what a* Non-ſequitur *is this?*

But, *Sir*, after all that Raillery and Diſdain with which this Argument is treated, which has, indeed, been often urged, and as often laughed at; yet I muſt confeſs, I cannot deſpiſe it, but am perſwaded that there is great Force in it, if it be ſtated well, and ſet in a true Light.

I do not then inſiſt that one was a Type of the other, nor argue from a bare Analogy, as to Jewiſh Church Member-ſhip, or the like, but my Argument is this; Baptiſm is now the Seal of the Covenant which was once ſealed by Circumciſion; Infants were by God's own Command admitted then, *Ergo*, Infants may be admitted now: Or thus, God did admit Infants into a Covenant of Grace and Salvation, thro' Jeſus Chriſt, and upon the Conditions of Faith and Obedience in that Covenant made with *Abraham*, and confirmed by the Seal of Circumciſion; Baptiſm of Infants does but admit them into the ſame Covenant upon the ſame Conditions, and as a Seal confirms that Covenant to them: *Ergo*, in Baptizing Infants we act by God's own Authority and Example; for we do

no more in baptizing them than by God's own Ordinance was done in Circumcising them. The Rite, indeed, is changed, it was Circumcising; it is now Baptism: What then? The Use of both these Rites is still the same; the One is a Seal of the Covenant of God, and so is the Other a Seal of the same Covenant. And so after all the pretended *Non-sequiturs* in this Argument from Circumcision to Baptism; when the Use or main Design of both these Rites, or Sacraments shall appear to be the same, the Argument will have Force, and the Change of the external Ordinances cannot lessen it.

In the Prosecution therefore of this Argument, I have Two Things which you will challenge me to prove.

1. That Circumcision, when enjoyned *Abraham*, was ordained to be the Seal of that Covenant which God made with him.

2. That the Covenant with *Abraham* was the same with ours, that is a Covenant of Grace and Salvation through Jesus Christ, and upon the Conditions of Faith and Obedience.

And if these Propositions be found true, the Consequence, I think, will be so clear as to want no Proof.

First, That Circumcision, when enjoyned *Abraham*, was ordained to be the Seal of that Covenant which God made with him. And this, I think, is very plain, both from the Original Institution of Circumcision in the Old Law, and the Explanations of it in the New: As to the Old Testament, God having made some Trial of *Abraham*, by calling him out of his own Country, and having found him readily observant in all that he commanded him; declares, *Gen.* 17. 2. that he will now establish a Covenant with him: *I will make my Covenant between me and thee, and thou shall be a Father of many Nations*, Ver. 4. And again, *Ver.* 7. *I will establish my Covenant between me and thee, and thy Seed after thee, in their Generations, for an everlasting Covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy Seed after thee.* And as every Contract among Men must have its Sanction, and Establishment; so here, God declares after what Manner this Covenant should be confirmed, *Ver.* 10. *This is my Covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy Seed after thee; every Man-Child among you shall be Circumcised:* Which Words do not make Circumcision the Substance of the Covenant, but only the Manner of Establishing, and Confirming it; as appears from the following Verse: And ye *shall circumcise the Flesh of your Fore-skin, and it shall be a Token*, or Sign of *Covenant between me and you.* And again, *Ver.* 13. *My Covenant shall be in your Flesh, for an everlasting Covenant*, that is, a Token or Pledge in your Flesh of an everlasting Covenant: For, as a Reverend Father of our own says, 'It was not a meer Mark where-'by

Bishop *Patrick*, in *loc.*

'by they ſhould be known to be *Abraham*'s Seed, and diſtinguiſh-'ed from other Nations; but they were hereby made the Chil-'dren of the Covenant, and intitled to the Bleſſings of it; and Cir-'cumciſion was the Seal of it. And this is farther evident from the New Teſtament; for St. *Paul* in his Controverſie with the *Jews*, about Juſtification, inſtances in *Abraham*, whom he declares to be juſtified not for his being circumciſed, but for the Faith he had before it; *Rom.* 4. 11. *He received the Sign of Circumciſion, a Seal*, or Pledge of the *Righteouſneſs of that Faith which he had yet being uncircumciſed*; a Seal of that Covenant by which God receives him as Righteous for his Faith. And thus St. *Peter*, Acts 7. 8. *He gave him the Covenant of Circumciſion*, that is, he gave him the Covenant which he ſealed, and confirmed by Circumciſion; which is both a uſual, and very intelligible way of ſpeaking: So alſo St. *Paul*, Gal. 3. 15. *Brethren, I ſpeak after the Manner of Men, if it be but a Man's Covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no Man diſannulleth, or addeth thereto.* And again, *Ver.* 17. he ſpeaks of the *Covenant that was confirmed before of God in Chriſt*, plainly alluding to this Covenant with *Abraham*, which was Sealed, and had its Confirmation by Circumciſion.

2. The Second Obſervation was, that this Covenant with *Abraham*, of which Circumciſion was the Seal, is the ſame Covenant with that which we Chriſtians are now admitted into with God, by Chriſt. Mr. *Keach*, I remember, diſowns this; and contrary to what I now maintain, offers this Argument, *p.* 47. *That Covenant that was made to ſeparate the natural Seed of* Abraham *from all other Nations of the World, and made ſure unto them the Earthly Promiſe of the Land of* Canaan; *could not be a Covenant of Grace which concerns the Infant-Seed of Believers under the Goſpel.*

He who often finds Fault with other Peoples Logic, ſhould take ſpecial Care of his own: Here was one little, but material Word omitted in this firſt Propoſition: It ſhould have run thus, *That Covenant which was made* only *to ſeparate*, &c. The want of that *only* ſpoils the Conſequence. It might be made thus to ſeparate *Abraham*'s Seed, and it might be made to other Ends too: And ſo it might be a Covenant of Grace, notwithſtanding God intended by it that Diſtinction of his People alſo.

To prove then that the Covenant, beſides the Promiſes it contained of a Land of *Canaan*, and a numerous Seed, was alſo a Covenant of Grace and Mercy, and Salvation in *Jeſus Chriſt*, and conſequently the ſame Covenant with ours: Be pleaſed, *Sir*, to conſider,

1. That the Covenant was made on the ſame general Conditions.

2. That it contained the ſame general Promiſes. 3. That

3. That both were founded on the ſame Conſideration, and had regard to the ſame Mediator *Jeſus Chriſt*.

1. That this Covenant which God made with *Abraham* was founded on the very ſame Conditions, on which that is eſtabliſhed, which we Chriſtians make with God in Chriſt; the Sum of what the Goſpel of Chriſt requires, in order to the Salvation of our Souls, is only a firm Faith and ſincere Obedience: And if this be ſo, the Agreement in this reſpect is very exact; God having required Faith and Obedience by the Covenant which he made with *Abraham*, as ſtrictly, and as indiſpenſably, as he has done by Chriſt.

As to Faith, the Caſe is ſo very plain, and ſo univerſally acknowledged on all ſides, that I ſhall need to ſay but little upon it: The Faith of *Abraham* was ſo eminently renown'd, and ſo illuſtrious a Pattern to all ſucceeding Ages, that to the everlaſting Memory of it, he is diſtinguiſhed by that ſignal Character, the *Father of the Faithful*; and all Chriſtians in the World are called his Children, as *we walk in the Steps of that Faith*, Rom. 4. 12. And that this Faith was the Condition of *Abraham*'s being received into Covenant, is evident not only from the Old Teſtament, which ſays, *Gen.* 15. 6. That *he believed in the Lord, and it was accounted to him for Righteouſneſs*; but alſo from the New, in which St. *Paul* convinces the *Jewiſh* Converts, that the Works of the Law were not the Conditions of Juſtification and Salvation; becauſe Abraham *himſelf was juſtified by Faith*, Rom. 4. 2, to 11. And that his Poſterity were bound to this general Faith, is plain in St. *Paul*'s Vindication of his Orthodoxy, on the very Account of his Believing *all that is written in the Law, and in the Prophets*, Acts 24. 14. And as Faith was one part of *Abraham*'s Covenant, ſo Obedience was another: And this appears plainly by that Injunction which God gave him at the very ſame time that he was eſtabliſhing his Covenant with him, *Gen.* 17. 12. *The Lord appear'd unto* Abraham, *and ſaid unto him, I am the Almighty God, walk before me, and be thou perfect:* Which Words the *Jews* themſelves look upon to be ſo much a Command of Univerſal Obedience, as from thence to conclude, that in Circumciſion they all covenanted to have no other God but him. [*See Biſhop* Patrick.]

2. As *Abraham*'s Covenant is the ſame with ours in its Conditions, ſo it is in its Promiſes too. The Two great Bleſſings of the Goſpel are Juſtification here, and eternal Life hereafter: As to the firſt of theſe, that *Abraham* was *Juſtified by his Faith*, and that conſequently Juſtification is one of the great Benefits and Bleſſings of the Covenant God made with him, is ſo plainly and expreſly aſſerted in the Goſpel, that it is needleſs to go about to prove it.

And

And that eternal Life in the World to come was promiſed to *Abraham* and his Poſterity by Chriſt, as well as it is to us, appears from hence, that the Land of *Canaan* has always been looked on as a Type and Figure of Heaven; and that not only by us in theſe latter Ages of the World, but is ſo eſteemed by St. *Paul* himſelf, *Heb.* 3. 1. And from the Account which the New Teſtament gives of the Spiritual Meaning and Deſign of the Old, when God declares to *Abraham*, That *he would be his God*, Gen. 17. 7. and to *Iſaac*, *Gen.* 26. 3. and to *Jacob*, *Gen.* 28. 13; That he intended hereby to reward their Faith and Obedience with the Kingdom of Heaven, is evident from the Words of Chriſt; who from theſe Promiſes proves the Certainty of ſuch a future State to the *Jews*, among whom it was controverted, *Mat.* 22. 31, 32. And St. *Paul* tells us, that *Abraham* and the Patriarchs expected ſuch a Recompence to be couched under thoſe Temporal Promiſes, *Heb.* 11. 13. where he ſays, *Theſe all died in Faith, not having* actually *received the Promiſes*, that is, the Bleſſings promiſed, while they were on Earth; *but having ſeen them afar of, and were perſwaded of them, and embraced them, and confeſſed that they were Strangers and Pilgrims on Earth, and deſired*, or looked *for a better Country*; that is to ſay, an heavenly. And what can be a better Proof that this was a Covenant of Grace, than to find the chief Bleſſings of the Goſpel here promiſed by God, and believed and expected by the Patriarchs, on the very Conditions of the Goſpel? But,

3. *Laſtly*, Both theſe are founded on the ſame Conſideration, and equally have reſpect to the ſame Mediator Jeſus Chriſt. And for the Confirmation of this, we all know, that the Promiſes which God made to *Abraham*, ſaying, *In thy Seed ſhall all the Nations of the Earth be bleſſed*; are truly and readily fulfilled only in Jeſus Chriſt. And as the Holy Spirit of God has taught us this, ſo Chriſt tells us, that *Abraham* himſelf underſtood it ſo: For diſcourſing with the *Jews*, about him, he ſaid, *John* 8. 56. *Your Father* Abraham *rejoyced*, and deſired *to ſee my Day, and he ſaw it, and was glad*, (i. e.) he was ſollicitous more perfectly to underſtand the Subſtance of theſe Promiſes, and he did underſtand them to be intended of me, and was delighted in the Contemplation.

But whether all that ſucceeded this Patriarch had the ſame particular Communication of this great Myſtery, is not at all to our Purpoſe: 'Tis ſufficient that the New Teſtament declares, that what Bleſſings were thus graciouſly promiſed in this Covenant with *Abraham* were with Reference to, and for the Sake of Jeſus Chriſt that was to come: And this St. *Paul* has expreſly affirmed, Gal. 3. 16, 17. *Now to* Abraham *and his Seed were the Promiſes made, he ſaid not, to Seeds as of many, but as of One, and*

and to thy Seed which is Christ. So he goes on, *this I say that the Covenant which was confirmed before of God in Christ*, &c. Affirming, in short, all that I have here been proving, *viz.* that Circumcision was the Seal for the Confirmation of that very Covenant which God made with *Abraham* in Christ Four Hundred and Thirty Years before the Law was given. So that *Abraham* had not only the same Covenant with us, but the very same Gospel that is preached to us, was preached to *Abraham* also, Gal. 3. 8. *The Scripture fore-seeing that God would justifie the Heathen through Faith, preached before the Gospel unto* Abraham. What Gospel was it? It was certainly the Gospel of Christ, through whom alone it was said to *Abraham, In thee shall all the Nations of the Earth be blessed.* And it was certainly at the Time when he established that Covenant which was confirmed of God in Christ. And all the Seed of *Abraham* that were circumcised were bound to worship the true God, and believe the general Promises of a *Messiah*; as we Christians are to believe and obey the Gospel more particularly revealed by Christ. From hence I conclude, seeing Infants at Eight Days old were circumcised and admitted into this Covenant with God, by his own Appointment and Command; this Command is a good Authority for the Baptizing of Infants, which is but a new Way of Admission into the same Covenant.

For while there is no Alteration of the Substance of the Covenant, but only of the external Ceremony of Admission, which is the Seal of it; all Things else are to continue as they were, till God shall ordain otherwise by a new Law: But when he did change the Seal from Circumcision to Baptism, he did not by any express Law forbid Infants to be admitted: Therefore by Virtue of the first Original Institution when God made this Covenant with *Abraham* by Circumcision, and commanded Infants to be admitted, we have Autority to admit them now by Baptism. For where the Covenant, and the Capacities are the same, the Reason also must be of the same Force. But to this Argument I have found it objected

1. That what was done in *Abraham*'s Time, was in the Minority of the Church, when Things were obscurely represented, but now, that we have clear Light, and in that respect are under a better Dispensation, there is not the same Reason for admitting Infants, which there was then. All the Force of this Objection lies in the different Degrees of Revelation, that have been made to *Abraham*, and to us; and this I readily acknowledge for a great Truth: That which God intended in that Covenant with *Abraham*, was but obscurely, and in general set forth, and the Particulars both of Faith and Practice, and also of our Reward and Happiness are more fully and clearly brought to Light by Jesus Christ.

When

When therefore I aſſerted, that our Covenant is the ſame with that made with *Abraham* and his Seed, I ſpeak of Generals, not of Particulars; and my Meaning is, that Faith and Obedience were required in *Abraham*'s Covenant, as well as they are from us. Not but that the particular Articles of that Faith, and the particular Duties of that Obedience too, are now more fully diſcovered, and ſet in a clearer Light. But I cannot ſee how this makes any Difference, either as to the Capacity, or the Right of Admiſſion to this Sacrament; becauſe Children being equally inſenſible of both, cannot be leſs capable of the one than of the other.

2. It is objected, that there was an expreſs Command for the Circumciſion of Infants, but there is none for baptizing them. To this I anſwer;

There was not the ſame Neceſſity for it: There was an abſolute Neceſſity for commanding Infants expreſly to be circumciſed; becauſe there was nothing Antecedent to that Inſtitution, that could give Light or Knowledge to direct to it. But there was no ſuch Neceſſity for an expreſs Precept for Baptizing Infants; becauſe this might be learnt from the Autority of God in the Antecedent Inſtitution under *Abraham*; For they were certainly as fit Subjects of the one as of the other; becauſe the Conditions were the ſame; and if as fit Subjects of the Covenant, equally to be received by the Seal of it.

This I am inclined to believe was the firſt Ground of Baptizing Infants among Chriſtians. When the Apoſtles firſt began to preach the Goſpel, and eſpecially to the *Jews*; the Subſtance of their Preaching was, that what God had long before declared by *Abraham* and the Prophets, he had now fulfilled and accompliſhed by Jeſus Chriſt. From whence they were to learn, that this Goſpel was no new Thing, but what had been long declared, and propheſied in old Time: The Covenant was the ſame, the Religion was the ſame, only brought into a clearer Light by a more perfect Revelation. This was the Sum of St. *Peter*'s Sermon, Acts 3. 18. *Thoſe Things that God before had ſhewed by the Mouth of all his Prophets, that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer, he hath ſo fulfilled.* And *Acts* 11. 25. *Ye are the Children of the Prophets, and of the Covenant which God made with our Fathers, ſaying unto* Abraham, *and in thy Seed ſhall all Nations of the Earth be bleſſed.* And for this Cauſe St. *Paul* ſays, *Rom.* 15. 8. *That Chriſt Jeſus was a Miniſter of the Circumciſion, for the Truth of God, to confirm the Promiſes made unto the Fathers.* And as this was the common Subject of the Apoſtles Preaching, ſo thoſe who were hereby convinced, and prevailed on to believe, were immediately admitted into the Chriſtian Covenant by Baptiſm.

Here is, indeed, no expreſs mention made of Infants, becauſe there was no Occaſion for it: Their own Reaſon and Underſtanding were ſufficient to convince them, that what God had authorized and commanded from the Beginning, was a very good Example for them to imitate. And conſequently, that when Circumciſion was aboliſhed from being any longer the Seal of God's Covenant, and Baptiſm was inſtituted in its ſtead, there was the ſame Reaſon for baptizing Infants, that there had been for circumciſing them: God's having commanded the One, was an Evidence of the Lawfulneſs of the Other. And what they were ſufficiently inſtructed in by the Autority of a Divine Precept and Command, in the Old Teſtament, was not abſolutely neceſſary to be repeated in the New; For to what purpoſe ſhould there be a particular Revelation to diſcover that which Men might be ſufficiently convinc'd of without one? And yet again,

2. The Baptiſm of Infants is founded on God's Word, in that, tho' there be no ſuch Precept, or Command of baptizing, in which Infants are *totidem verbis* expreſſed; yet there is ſuch a Precept and Command, in which Infants are certainly included: And this I ſhall prove thus;

1. From St. *Peter*'s Words, *Acts* 2. 39. *Repent, and be baptized, that your Sins may be blotted out, for the Promiſe is to you and your Children.* In which Words Children are fairly intimated, at leaſt, to be entitled both to the Promiſes of the Covenant, and to the Sacrament that confirms it. I am not ignorant, that ſome laugh at this Argument, with a great deal of Scorn, and Deriſion, and think it ridiculous to mention it; becauſe Men and Women are often call'd Children in Scripture; as the *Children of Iſrael* are often ſpoken of when Infants are not all intended, but only Men of the *Poſterity of Iſrael.* I grant it, and yet when they have laugh-ed their fill, I cannot think this Argument ſo ridiculous, nor ſo much to be deſpiſed: For, tho' its true, the Word Children, if that were all, might import no more than the Poſterity: Yet the Promiſe here ſpoken of, is that very Covenant into which Children, I mean Infants, were commanded to be admitted. So that if the Promiſe which God made with *Abraham*, and his Children included Infants; this Promiſe made to Chriſtians, and their Children, will by the ſame Autority, include Infants alſo; for the Promiſe is ſtill the ſame.

2. The Precept for Baptizing is general, and does not exclude any that are capable of being admitted into Covenant with God in Chriſt; Infants are capable of being admitted into Covenant with God in Chriſt, therefore the Precept does and muſt include them: The firſt is evident from the very Words of St. *Matt.* 28. *Go make Diſciples of all Nations, and baptize them*; which being given in general, and unlimited Terms,

Terms, and ordained by Almighty God as one of the ordinary Means of Salvation, ought to be extended to all Perſons whatſoever, that are capable of Admiſſion into the Covenant. Infants are capable of being admitted into the Covenant, and then Infants are alſo included in this Precept or Command. The Latter I have in great meaſure prov'd already in my Anſwer to the Two firſt Objections. I ſhall only add here, that it ſeems ſtrange to me, when ſo many of your Perſwaſion allow Infants to be in the Covenant, and believe that they ſhall be ſaved, which they cannot be, but by the Merits of Chriſt; that yet none of them ſhould think Infants intitled to this Sacrament. For why ſhould not the Covenant be confirmed to all thoſe, to whom the Promiſes of it belong? If indeed all Infants were ſaid and prov'd to be in a State of Sin and inevitable Damnation, this would be a real Argument againſt us; for then, we ſhould be charged with confirming the Covenant to thoſe to whom the Promiſes of it do not at all belong? And this would be a Crime indeed. But if Infants may be ſaved by Chriſt, nothing of this can be alledged. But you ſay, that we baptize Infants that know nothing of it, and that is almoſt as bad; Why ſo? We only by this Seal confirm the Covenant to thoſe to whom God has promiſed the Bleſſings of it. And where is the Impropriety of that? Or why is it more abſurd to baptize thoſe in the Name of Chriſt that know nothing at all of him, than to Redeem and Save thoſe by Chriſt that know nothing at all of him?

In ſhort, if no good Reaſon of Difference can be alledged from the Nature of Things, let Men wrangle never ſo long, it muſt follow, that if Infants are in the Covenant of Chriſt, they are alſo fit Subjects of Chriſtian Baptiſm; and if they are fit Subjects of Chriſtian Baptiſm, then the general Precept includes them; and ſo the Baptim of Infants is as much founded on the Autority of God's Word, as the Baptiſm of Men and Women.

But I am ſenſible, *Sir*, you will not acquieſce in this: No, *Baptiſm is a Sacrament, a Fundamental in Religion, that gives Being to a Church; in which you muſt have a Command, mentioning Infants expreſly*, totidem verbis, *or it will not do; Inferences and Deductions here are not of ſufficient Force.* But by the Way; What is your Second Objection, but a Deduction, that Infants not being capable of Faith, are not capable of Baptiſm? This is unreaſonable, and very hard, when you your ſelf muſt argue by Deductions and Inferences againſt the Baptiſm of Infants, not to allow us to do ſo for it; I appeal whether this be fair. However, fore-ſeeing that this my Argument would be thus withſtood, I proceed to ſhow,

1. That clear and evident Deductions from the Word of God are of equal Force with the expreſs Word of it; and that in Fundamental, as well as in other Principles of Religion: For, can we ſuppoſe, that in the Manifeſtation of all thoſe Divine Truths, which are revealed in the Goſpel, God would have us ſuperſede all Uſe of our own Underſtandings in the Concluſions to be drawn, and the Conſequences that follow from ſuch Doctrines? And yet we muſt do this, if the Inferences and Deductions from them be not acknowledg'd of ſufficient Autority to determine our Judgment, and guide our Practiſe. It was certainly no part of God's Deſign to undermine our Reaſon by Revelation; but to Enlighten and Improve it; to ſupply its Defects, by teaching us thoſe Things which of our ſelves we were not able to find out; and to clear ſome Principles of Religion that to the Light of Reaſon only ſeem'd diſputable and doubtful. But where that Light ſhines bright, and clear of it ſelf, it is a Divine Lamp held forth from Heaven to direct us, and its Autority is not to be deſpiſed.

Thus for Inſtance, in the Inſtitution of a Sacrament, we muſt expect a particular Revelation. For this being no part of natural Religion, but a Poſitive Ordinance, and depending on the ſole Pleaſure and Will of God; we can know nothing but what he ſhall be pleaſed to reveal. For tho' baptizing was in uſe among the *Jews*, as a Rite in admitting Proſelytes, and by our Saviour receiv'd from them; yet it muſt be his Poſitive Decree and Command, that muſt make it a Sacrament to us. Had it therefore been the Autority of the Inſtitution it ſelf that had been in diſpute: You had argu'd well, that an expreſs Precept was to be expected. But as to the Subjects of Baptiſm, or the Perſons to be baptized, the Caſe is not the ſame; nor is there the ſame Reaſon to look for a Command mentioning Infants in expreſs Words: For, tho' the Sacrament be new, the Covenant is ſtill the ſame. And therefore, we may here argue, and be particularly inſtructed by Parity of Reaſon, *viz.* that thoſe who were admitted to the Old Covenant may be admitted to the New; becauſe the Conditions, and the Promiſes are the ſame in both. And here Deductions and Inferences from God's Word are of ſufficient Force to determine the Argument, and ought to be received in all ſuch Caſes. And the chief Thing to be reſpected, is not whether the Matter be Fundamental or no; but the Certainty of it, and the clear Evidence of its Truth. A certain, and evident Truth ought to be received in Things Fundamental as well as not Fundamental, let the Way of attaining the Knowledge be what it will; whether from the Light of Reaſon, or Revelation; or Deduction, and Inferences from it.

2. But

2. But to make this more plain I ſhall further ſhow from St. *Peter*'s own Example, in being determined by ſuch Arguments in a Caſe equally Fundamental, that this Autority ought to be ſubmitted to in the Caſe now before us. The Caſe I ſhall inſtance in, is, the Admiſſion of the *Gentiles* into the Church of Chriſt, and baptizing them: And there, the Queſtion once was much as it is now, *viz.* about the fit Subjects of Baptiſm. For ſome then did as firmly believe, that the *Gentiles* as polluted and unclean, were as unfit to be admitted into the Covenant with God, as others now-a-days would have Infants excluded for their Incapacities. And I would beg theſe Men to obſerve, what Methods the Holy Ghoſt uſed for the Conviction of St. *Peter*; and how he directs him by ſuch a Train of general Inſtructions, as all along required the ſincere and impartial Uſe of his Reaſon in the Application of them. And at laſt, there was no particular Command for baptizing them; all that the Holy Ghoſt diſcovered, amounted to no more than to ſhow that the *Gentiles* were not by Almighty God excluded from the Covenant: From whence St. *Peter*'s own Reaſon convinced him, that therefore they were to be baptized.

St. *Peter* had a Viſion from Heaven, wherein there appeared, *Acts* 10. 11. *A certain Veſſel deſcending unto him as it had been a great Sheet knit at the four Corners, and let down to the Earth: Wherein were all manner of four-footed Beaſts of the Earth, and wild Beaſts, and creeping Things, and Fouls of the Air. And there came a Voice to him, Riſe* Peter, *kill and eat. And when* Peter *ſaid, not ſo, Lord, for I have never eaten any Thing common or unclean: The Voice ſpake the ſecond time, what God hath cleanſed, that call not thou common. And this was done thrice, and the Veſſel was received up again into Heaven.* Here is nothing in expreſs Words about the *Gentiles*, nor did St. *Peter* yet apprehend that they were concerned in the Viſion: For it is ſaid, *Ver.* 17. That *Peter doubted in himſelf what the Viſion which he had ſeen ſhould mean.*

But when the Holy Spirit gave him Warning of Three Men coming to him, and ordered him to go along with them, *doubting nothing*, and the Meſſengers preſently came from *Cornelius* the *Centurion*, who was a *Gentile*; then he underſtood by Deductions of his own Reaſon, that the Viſion referr'd to the *Gentiles*, and that God had ſignify'd thereby, that they, notwithſtanding their reputed Uncleanneſs might be admitted into the Church of Chriſt. Ver. 31. *Of a Truth I perceive that God is no Reſpecter of Perſons, but in every Nation he that feareth God*, &c. Here was in all this no expreſs Command for admitting the *Gentiles*, but a Viſion, from which this was to be learned by way of Inference and Deduction. And St. *Peter* convinced by this, preached *Jeſus Chriſt* unto them; and

as.

as he was Preaching, *the Holy Ghoſt fell on all them that heard the Word, and they ſpake with Tongues, and magnified God*, Ver. 44, 46. Here was all this while no Precept, or expreſs Command to baptize them; but St. *Peter* being convinced, both by the Viſion, and by the Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon them, that the Covenant belonged to them: From thence concludes by way of Inference, that they therefore ought to be Baptized. Ver. 47, 48. *Can any Man forbid Water that theſe ſhould be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghoſt as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the Name of the Lord.*

I hope it will not be diſputed, but that the Admiſſion of the *Gentiles*, is a very Fundamental Doctrine in Chriſtianity. From this inſtance therefore I obſerve, 1. That the Inference from a Divine Revelation had with St. *Peter*, the Force and Authority of a Divine Law, as much as tho' it had been ſaid *totidem verbis*, ye ſhall admit the *Gentiles* into the Chriſtian Church. And therefore it was that he told his Brethren, *Acts* 11. 17. that his not complying had been withſtanding the Autority of God. *Foraſmuch then as God gave them the ſame Gift, that he did unto us, that believed in the Lord Jeſus: What was I, that I could withſtand God?* 2. That when we are ſufficiently aſſured, that any Perſons are capable of Admiſſion into the Chriſtian Covenant; this is a ſufficient Autority to baptize them, without any particular expreſs Command. The *Holy Ghoſt* in this Viſion gave no Command for baptizing *Cornelius*, but only taught St. *Peter*, that the *Gentiles* were not to be excluded from the Covenant; and from thence he himſelf could ſufficiently determine, that it was God's Will, that they ſhould be baptized. *Who can forbid Water that theſe ſhould be baptized?* And to bring this home to our Caſe, it is juſt thus that we argue for Infant Baptiſm. God has from the Beginning with *Abraham* taught us, that Infants are not excluded from the Covenant of *Chriſt*: And from thence we conclude as St. *Peter* did, that thoſe who are not excluded from the Covenant, are included in the general Precept of admitting them by Baptiſm. And how ſtrange is the Power of Prejudice not to be ſatisfy'd with that Way and Method of Conviction, which the *Holy Ghoſt* himſelf uſed to the great Apoſtle of our Saviour.

To this I have found objected; that there was expreſs Law for Baptiſing of the *Gentiles*. Matt. 18. *Go teach and baptize all Nations*, &c. To this I anſwer,

1. That tho' we, who are aſſured, that it was God's Purpoſe to call the *Gentiles*, do very well to interpret that Command for Converting and Baptizing them; yet the Apoſtles before this Viſion of St. *Peter* did not apprehend this to be the Meaning of it. And a Law can have

have no Force, nor be any warrant, farther than the Purpoſe and Meaning of it can be underſtood.

In *Mat.* 24. 7. 2. The Words themſelves did not neceſſarily and literally imply any ſuch Meaning, that the *Gentiles* were to be admitted: For, as Dr. *Hammond* has truly obſerv'd, the Word ἔθνη did not then in common uſe import the *Gentiles*, always excluſive of the *Jews*; but is oft uſed for *the Jews, in their ſeveral Nations, and Countries.* And, indeed, had that Word in common Acceptation ſignify'd the *Gentiles*, I do not ſee how St. *Peter*, and the *other Apoſtles* could have been ignorant of that Doctrine. And it is poſſible, that on this Account God might think fit to make further Diſcoveries of the Calling in of the *Gentiles*, the better to inſtruct them what was his Purpoſe, and Intention in thoſe former Words.

But, in ſhort, what was it that moved St. *Peter* to baptize *Cornelius?* Did he do it upon the Autority of the Precept mentioned? *Matt.* 28. Its plain he did not; He did not then ſo underſtand thoſe Words. And its obſervable, that in all that Affair there was not the leaſt mention made of that fore-mention'd Precept, but it was the Viſion that Convinced, and Rectify'd St. *Peter*'s Judgment by the rational Inferences which he was to draw from it. And I may add that what convinced him, convinced all his Brethren too. *Acts* 11. 18. *When they heard thoſe Things, they held their peace, and glorified God, ſaying; then hath God alſo to the* Gentiles *granted Repentance unto Life.* And thus it ſtill remains good, that an Argument by Deduction from Scripture or Revelation is ſufficient to convince us, who are the fit Subjects of Chriſtian Baptiſm; and by ſuch an Argument we do prove, that the Baptiſm of infants is founded on the Autority of God's holy Word.

CHAP. III.

THE fourth and laſt Objection is, That there is no mention made of any ſuch Practice among the Apoſtles, or the moſt Primitive Times. I muſt here obſerve that the State of the Queſtion is now chang'd, from Matter of Law to Matter of Fact; and we are now only to enquire what Diſcoveries we can find of ſuch a Practice in the Beginning of Chriſtianity. As to this Objection therefore I anſwer,

1. That

1. That tho' it were true, that there is no mention made in Scripture of such a Practice, yet this would not at all prove, that there was no such Thing in use; and especially, when it is found not contrary to the Laws of God. For we are no more to expect an express, clear, and distinct Account of all Apostolical Practices from the New Testament, than we are to expect a perfect History of the first Ages of the World from the Six first Chapters of *Genesis*. It was sufficient for the Apostles to acquaint us with all necessary Laws and Commands of God; and with the Practices only occasionally as it served either to illustrate or confirm those Laws when called in Question. Otherwise they were in many Particulars silent.

2. I do not affirm, that it was the constant and universal Practice from the Beginning of the Apostles Preaching to baptize Infants. For I know very well that God did not think fit to make a compleat Establishment of all Things at once, but brought Things to Perfection by degrees. As a Reverend Bishop has observed to us; there was a Time when the Christian Church consisted only of *Jewish* Converts, and we know when the *Gentiles* were first admitted: And there was a Time when Circumcision was thought necessary to be observed, and it was some Years before this was laid aside. So the Apostles according to Christ's Commission, being chiefly intent on the Conversion of those Persons that were polluted with Infidelity and Immorality; had not as yet taken the State of Infants into their Consideration. But when afterwards many Families were converted, their Condition came also to be considered. And I conjecture, that this might first be when Circumcision came to be rejected. For it is very likely, that when the *Jewish* Converts who esteemed their Infants to be admitted into Covenant by Circumcision found the Apostles declare, that Circumcision was not necessary; they then began to start the Case of Infants, who by Circumcision had that Priviledge signed to them, which by the Abolition of it would seem to have been lost. But this I mention only as a Conjecture which you may take or leave, as you see fit.

Bishop *Pearson*, in *Acta Apost. Lec.* 3. § 15.

3. Tho' we have no Declaration in express Words, that Infants were baptized in the Apostles Times; yet from one Expression of St. *Paul*, such a Practice may reasonably be concluded. He speaks so of the *Holiness* of Children, as seems not to admit of any rational Interpretation, and agreeable to the Case and Context, but by supposing that those Infants were admitted to Baptism. It is 1 *Cor.* 7. 14. where giving his Judgment concerning those Christians who were married to Unbelievers, he

he perſwades their Cohabitation in that Conjugal State, if it may be permitted, by this Argument. For *the unbelieveing Husband is ſanctified by the Wife* (i. e.) ſhe being a Believer; and *the unbelieving Wife is ſanctified by the Husband; elſe were your Children unclean, but now are they holy.* In which Words the Apoſtle plainly founds his Determination on this known and received Opinion, that the Children of Chriſtian Parents, and ſo alſo if but one Parent was Chriſtian, are holy; *Elſe were your Children unclean, but now are they holy.*

That Infant Children are here intended, is plain in that he ſpeaks of ſuch whoſe Holineſs depended on the Sanctification of the believing Parent, which muſt reſpect Infants only, becauſe the Holineſs of adult Perons muſt be from their own actual Faith.

Now the Queſtion is, what St. *Paul* means here by Holineſs: He ſpeaks of the Holineſs of ſuch Children, one of whoſe Parents only were Chriſtian, and yet of ſuch Holineſs of ſuch Children, as from thence to prove the Lawfulneſs of the Cohabitation of ſuch Parents. To this End the Holineſs of ſuch Children muſt be evident and indiſputable, or otherwiſe the Argument would not have Force. Now, tho' the Children both whoſe Parents were Chriſtians, may be reckoned an holy Seed or Off-ſpring, by Deſignation; yet it might juſtly be doubted whether the Children, one of whoſe Parents only were Chriſtian, were thus holy, when the Lawfulneſs of their Cohabitation was diſputed. I ask then, how it ſhould come to paſs, that when the Lawfulneſs of the Cohabitation of a Chriſtian and an Infidel was diſputed; yet it ſhould remain a known and indiſputable Doctrine, that their Children were not unclean, but holy? For this the Apoſtle aſſerts, And I am perſwaded, that the only proper Anſwer to this Queſtion muſt be, That there was ſome known Privilege according to the Practice of the Church, at leaſt of that Church at that time belonging to ſuch Children; by which the Churches Opinion of their Holineſs, became unqueſtionable. Had not this been ſo, St. *Paul's* Argument, inſtead of proving what he intended by it, might rather have brought the Opinion of their Holineſs into Queſtion. But that it ſeems was ſo certain, ſo well known, ſo unqueſtionable, that he might ſafely ground his Argument upon it. And yet, methinks, there was the ſame Reaſon to diſpute one as well as the other, had not ſome cuſtomary Privilege made the Difference, and what that Privilege was, the true Notion of Holineſs will diſcover.

The beſt Notion of Holineſs in general that I have yet met with, is from the Learned and Judicious Mr. *Mede*, Diſc. 2. who makes it to conſiſt in Religious *Separation* and *Diſcrimination* from other Things; which in Oppoſition thereto, are called Common. I would ask then by what

other Means or Privilege the Infants of Christian Parents can be eminently discriminated from the Children of Infidel Parents; so as in the Language of the Church to be called Holy; but by being baptized? In this Interpretation, the Coherence and Purport of the Apostle's Argument is easie and plain, which otherwise is unintelligible. The Children of Gentile Parents are *common and unclean*, in St. *Peter*'s Sense, mentioned above, *Acts* 10. 14, 15. (*i. e.*) not yet to be admitted to the Seal of the Covenant, but the Infants of Believers are holy and may be baptized. And thus also the unbelieving Husband is sanctified by the believing Wife, in that he who is an Unbeliever has his Child baptized because of the Faith of the Mother, as much as tho' both Parents were Christian.

And this is a good Argument of the Innocence of their Cohabitation: For if the Church admits the Child of an unbelieving Husband to Baptism, because the Mother is a Believer, the Cohabitation of those Parents of whom such a Child is born, cannot be thought unlawful, upon the Account of their Religion. Thus every Thing in the Words is Intelligible and Plain, and if this be a true Interpretation, here is Proof that the Baptism of Infants was in use in the Apostles Time.

But you, *Sir*, have sent me some Objections, and another Interpretation of this Place: Both which shall be considered. I shall begin with the Objections.

Object. 1. It is objected, That *there is no other Holiness here attributed to the Children, than what is ascrib'd to the unbelieving Parent; for, as the Children are said to be holy, so it is said of the unbelieving Husband, or Wife, that he, or she is* sanctified, or made holy; *and therefore as much ought to be baptized.*

Answ. But where's the Force of this Conclusion? You seem from hence to infer, that there is the same Holiness in both: But, why so? Are there not several Degrees or Kinds of Holiness, or Religious Discrimination? Are not all Christians holy by their Profession? In which Sense St. *Paul* calls them ἅγιοι, the *Saints or holy Ones* by way of Distinction from other Men: And are not all true Christians holy by a real Sanctification of God's Spirit? And yet these are not the same. Again, Are not all that minister at the Altar, holy in a third Sense by their Office? There is then an internal, and there is an external Holiness; there is a real, actual Holiness, consisting in Faith and Obedience, by the Sanctification of the Spirit; and there is a relative Holiness, consisting in Separation by Profession, or Privilege, or Office. Here then are different Degrees of Holiness ascrib'd to different Persons, according to their several Circumstances. The Holiness of the Believer is of one Kind;

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that of the Unbeliever of another; that of their Children of a third: And ſo this Objection can be of no Force in that its founded on this groſs Miſtake; That the Holineſs is the ſame in all!

Object. 2. It is objected, That the Holineſs, or Sanctification of the unbelieving Parent is mentioned by the Apoſtle as The Cauſe of the Childrens Holineſs: *Otherwiſe*, (i. e.) were it not that the Unbeliever was thus ſanctified, *your Children were unclean, but now are they holy.* Conſequently, ſay you, there is a ſtronger Argument in this Text for baptizing the unbelieving Parent, than the Children; *Even as The Cauſe is more noble than the Effect.*

Anſw. I anſwer; If it had been ſaid *One Cauſe* of the Childrens Holineſs it had ſounded better; becauſe *the Cauſe* looks as tho' it were the chief or only Cauſe, in which Senſe the Aſſertion is not true: For, the Logicians have juſtly taught us to diſtinguiſh that there is a principal Cauſe, and a leſs principal Cauſe. The Holineſs of the unbelieving Parent is at moſt but a leſs principal Cauſe of the Holineſs of the Children, or a Cauſe *ſine quâ non*; *otherwiſe were the Children unclean, but now are they holy.* And if this be St. *Paul*'s Meaning; yet then in this Senſe, the Concluſion will fail. For, whereas it is alledged, that on this Account, the Words are a *ſtronger Argument for Baptizing the unbelieving Parents, than their Children, even as the Cauſe is more noble than the Effect:* Here lies the Weakneſs of this Objection; which is, indeed, a downright Fallacy; for it is not the *leſs principal*, but the Principal Cauſe only that is nobler than the Effect. 'Tis one of the Maxims of Logic, that the leſs principal Cauſe, *Semper eſt deterior effectu ſuo*, is always leſs noble than the Effect. There can then be no Force in this Concluſion, unleſs Men will aſſert, that the Holineſs of the unbelieving Parent, is the Principal Cauſe of the Holineſs of the Children, which is more than St. *Paul* ever ſaid.

Object. 3. It is objected, That a Fœderal Holineſs cannot be intended here, unleſs it be ſuppoſed, that the unbelieving Husband or Wife is in the Covenant of Grace.

Anſw. But why ſo? I have already ſhown, that their Holineſs is not the ſame; the one therefore may be a Fœderal Holineſs, and the other not; and, ſo this is a falſe Deduction.

Object. 4. Another Objection is, That if here he meant a Fœderal Holineſs, whereby Infants are ſet apart from the reſt of the World, as Members of Chriſt's Church, they ought to be admitted to the Lord's Supper alſo; which Ordinance is no leſs a Duty, and Privilege of every Member of Chriſt's Church than Baptiſm. And therefore ſays Mr. *A*— *It is well known that among the Ancients, Infants were for a time admitted*

to this Sacrament, as well as to the former: But seeing none now to the Latter, why to the Former?

He who makes this Objection, has furnish'd me with an Answer to it, and says, That *Self-examination is urged as a Bar in this.*

But if this be all, I shall not thank him for the Invention. There is another, and I am perswaded, a better Argument drawn from the different Nature and Design of these Two Sacraments. For Baptism is a Sacrament of Initiation; the other of Confirmation. And, tho' God may, and does of his abundant Grace admit Infants into his Covenant; yet the Renewing of this Covenant is founded on a Supposition of our Frailty; who, more or less, do all transgress the Conditions of our Baptismal Vow, and impair our Hope. The Lord's Supper therefore was intended, the stronger to oblige Men to actual Faith and Repentance, after the Violation of their first Vow, and to administer Comfort in our Penitential Sorrows, in the Commemoration of our Saviour's Passion.

This Sacrament therefore in the very Nature of it always supposes actual Faith and Repentance, which Baptism does not. Actual Faith and Repentance are not universally necessary to Baptism, as I have proved above, but where Sin and Infidelity have gone before. For he that has never sinn'd, has nothing to repent of. And the Innocence of the Person then is a sufficient Qualification for Baptism, where there is a rational Hope, that he shall afterwards believe and obey the Gospel. But the Lord's Supper, which was design'd for the Renewing, and Confirmation of our Vow, supposes both that Vow to have been broken, and that Breach to have been repented of.

There is not therefore the same Reason for admitting Infants to the Lord's Supper as to Baptism; because the different Nature and End of each Sacrament shows the One to be proper, and the other not. For which Cause that Custom is now left off.

I think then Mr. *A*—'s Objections against my Interpretation of this Text appear to have very little or no Force. I desire now that my Reasons against his Interpretation of the Place may be as fairly considered, and as impartial a Judgment pass'd upon them: Which is most agreeable to the Context, and the Force of the Apostle's Argument and Design. His Interpretation is this; *The Scope of the Apostle determines the Sanctification or Holiness of the unbelieving Husband or Wife to be no other than Matrimonial Holiness, or Chastity; in Opposition to Uncleanness, or Fornication, (in which Sense it is taken,* 1 Thess. 4. 3, 4, 7. *and consequently by the Holiness of the Children flowing from it, we may understand no other than Legitimacy, in which Sense*

Senſe we read of a godly or holy Seed, Mal. 2. 15. *So that St.* Paul *here brings Two Arguments to prove the Marriage to be good.* 1. *Becauſe the Unbeliever* (ἡγίασται) *hath been ſanctified, not by, but to, or unto the Believer by being joyned in holy Matrimony; and conſequently a Divorce would be contrary to the Law of Chriſt, unleſs for the Cauſe of Fornication.* 2. (Ab abſurdo) *from the Abſurdity that would follow ſhould they ſeparate upon the Account of Religion, thereby diſowning their Marriage, and conſequently baſtardizing their Children; which the Apoſtle, ſuppoſing them unwilling to do, adviſes them to continue with their unbelieving Husband or Wife, notwithſtanding their Differences in Religion. Thus this Text Mr.* A— *ſays is expounded by* Melanchthon, Camerarius, *and* Muſculus, *who alſo cites St.* Jerome *and* Ambroſe *for it; acknowledging, that he had formerly abuſed it againſt the Anabaptiſts.* So that it ſeems in this, we muſt conſider both the Interpretation, and the Autorities produced to confirm it. As to the Argument I have theſe Things to offer:

1. That ſuch a Senſe is put upon theſe Words, as ſome of them are never found to have in all the Holy Scripture. For, tho' it is true, that *Holineſs* is ſometimes uſed for *Chaſtity*, and particularly, 1 *Theſſ.* 3. 3, 4, 7. in Oppoſition to Fornication; yet *Uncleanneſs* is never taken for *Illegitimacy* or *Baſtardy* in a litteral Senſe, as it is here rendred by Mr. *A*—. As to what is alleged concerning a *godly or holy Seed,* Mal. 2. 15. which Mr. *A*— by the Autority of *Calvin*, and other Learned Interpreters, would underſtand to be *Legitimacy*; let thoſe learned Interpreters be who they will; it is very plain, that they muſt take Legitimacy there not in a Litteral Senſe, but Figurative, according to the uſual Language of the Prophets, who often expreſs Idolatry by Whoredom and Fornication, and call the *Revolting* into it the *Marrying a ſtrange* God; and *going a whoring after Idols,* Ezek. 6. 9. St. *Jerome* and and the *Chaldee* Paraphraſe by the holy Seed, underſtand the Poſterity of *Abraham* in Oppoſition to the Gentiles; and the former ſays, The Prophets Purpoſe here was to reprove the *Jews* for Marrying Wives of the Idolatrous Nations, and he grounds this Interpretation on *Ezra* 9. 2. And if this be good, the *holy Seed is* the People under Covenant with God in Diſtinction from the Gentiles.

And therefore I ſay again, that tho' Uncleanneſs is uſed in the New Teſtament for Fornication and Senſuality; yet not once for Baſtardy, nor *Holineſs* for *Legitimacy.* But, I think, I may ſay, that whenever theſe Words are uſed, and eſpecially when they are ſet in Oppoſition one to another; Uncleanneſs denotes ſomething of the vile Pollutions that were common among the Idolatrous Heathens; and Holineſs, when attributed to Perſons, always includes ſomething of Diſtinction and

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Diſcrimination from the Heathens, either by way of Perſonal Excellence, or of Privilege. And therefore,

2. It is eaſie to ſhew, that as theſe Words are not uſed for *Baſtardy* and *Legitimacy* in any other place of the New Teſtament, ſo that they cannot have any ſuch Signification here. Mr. *A*— ſays, That St. *Paul here ſpeaks of Matrimonial Chaſtity in Oppoſition to Fornication; and that his Deſign was to ſhew, that the Marriage was good notwithſtanding their Difference in Religion; and that they were therefore under no Obligation to ſeparate on that Account; which ſeems plainly to be one of the Scruples about which the Apoſtle wrote.* The Chriſtians, indeed, had Scruples about their Cohabitation with Infidels; But how does it appear that the Scruple was, that after their Converſion to Chriſtianity, their Marriage was no longer *valid or good?* How does this appear? Their Scruple was, I confeſs, whether or no they were to ſeparate on Account of their Difference in Religion: But the Ground of that Scruple was not any Fear that *their Marriage-Contract was invalid, and their Cohabitation to be deem'd Fornication*; but a Tenderneſs upon Account of the Unbelievers being an Infidel and Idolater; leſt by ſo near an Alliance to ſuch an one, they ſhould ſeem either to run into Danger, or to partake of the Pollution and Guilt of Idolatry and Unbelief: This is agreeable to the Apprehenſions which we find that the Primitive Chriſtians had. An Inſtance of which *Juſtin Martyr* gives an Account of: Of a Woman, who upon her Converſion to Chriſtianity finding that ſhe could not reclaim her Husband from the abominable Lewdneſs of his Heathen Life, would be divorced from him, and tho' at the Importunity of her Friends, ſhe continued with him ſomewhat longer; yet finding he grew worſe, ὅπως μὴ κοινωνὸς τῶν ἀδικημάτων καὶ ἀσεβημάτων γένηται μενοῦσα ἐν τῇ συζυγίᾳ, &c. *leſt ſhe ſhould be Partaker of his Iniquities and Impieties by cohabiting with him, and being Partner with his Table and Bed, ſhe gave him a Bill of Divorce,* καὶ ἐχωρίσθη, and *was parted from him.* This remarkable Inſtance ſhews what the Apprehenſions of the Primitive Chriſtians, as to this Matter were, and gives no ſmall Light to the Debate now in hand.

And that ſuch as this was, in Truth, the Caſe upon which St. *Paul* there treats, is farther evident from the Coherence of the Text with what goes before.

The Queſtions upon which St. *Paul* wrote were ſeveral: Firſt, Whether Chriſtians ſhould then Marry, which he rather diſſuades as that which would more engage them in the Affairs of the World, and make them leſs willing to ſuffer Perſecution. This he mentions both in the Beginning and End of the Chapter; but then with this Reſtriction, that they

they ſhould rather marry, than be ſubject to impulſes of *burning Luſts*, Ver. 9.

Next to the Married, he declares, that they are bound by the Law of God, not to ſeparate, if they can avoid it. *To the Married I command, yet not I, but the Lord; Let not*, &c. *Ver.* 10, 11. Then comes the Caſe now in hand concerning thoſe who were Married, but not both Parties as yet converted to Chriſtianity; and among them it was a Queſtion whether their Difference in Religion was a juſt Cauſe of Separation. Now, I ſay, had the Ground of this Scruple been an Opinion, or Fear, that their Continuance in that married State had been equal to Fornication or Uncleanneſs: St. *Paul* who knew very well that their Difference in Religion made no ſuch Alteration in the Caſe, would never have uſher'd in his Determination with, *thus ſpeak I, not the Lord*, but thus, *not I, but the Lord*, as *V.* 10. It is not credible, or morally poſſible, that He, who was immediately influenced by the Holy Ghoſt in the Execution of his Apoſtolic Office, ſhould only give his Conjectural Judgment, or meerly Prudential Determination, in a Queſtion: In which both he and they were afore determined by the expreſs Law, and Inſtitution of God; and in which he knew himſelf to be ſo determined. *To the Married command I, and yet not I, but the Lord: Let not the Wife depart from her Husband*, Ver. 10. Eſpecially, if the Conſequence of their Separation would prove ſo pernicious, as to Baſtardize their Children, (as Mr. *A* – ſuppoſes:) He was the more oblig'd to determine them by the Autority of God's Inſtitution, or Law. It is, I ſay, incredible, that he ſhould uſher in the Determination of ſo important a Queſtion, only by a Conjectural Order, that could not determine their Conſcience: For, ſeeing it was but St. *Paul*'s Order, and not God's Command, it could not determine the Good or Evil of the Thing. Had therefore the Queſtion been, what Mr. *A* — ſuppoſes it, St. *Paul* muſt have determined it by God's Autority, and not by his own only; ſo that the very Manner of the Expreſſion plainly proves, that the Queſtion was only about the *Danger* of Cohabiting with an Infidel, and an Idolater: And if this be the Caſe, Mr. *A*—'s Interpretation of *Holineſs* by *Legitimacy* cannot be good. For Divorce in this Caſe can never baſtardize the Children, that is only done by the Original Illegitimacy of the Marriage-Contract. And ſo far is St. *Paul* from aſſerting what Mr. *A*— affirms, that *Divorce would be unlawful*, that he, if the Unbeliever *will not cohabit*, leaves the Chriſtian at liberty to *ſeparate*; which he would rather have diſſuaded, if a Separation had been againſt the Law of Chriſt, and made their Children Baſtards.

As to the Autority of some Commentators, *Melancthon*, *Camerarius*, and *Musculus*, who are alledged to Countenance this Construction; What does it signifie, when it appears thus plainly to be contrary to the Use of the Phrase, and the Coherence of the Place? And that it does so, will be more plain, if we observe,

3. That Mr. *A*—'s Interpretation destroys the Force of St. *Paul*'s Argument, which our Notion of Holiness confirms. Mr. *A*— says, St. *Paul* proves their Marriage good by Two Arguments: First, Because the Unbeliever ἡγίασται, *hath been sanctified to*, or *unto* the Believer (*i. e.*) *joyned in holy Matrimony.* If he means that, because Matrimony is an holy State, therefore their Cohabitation is lawful notwithstanding the one Party is not Christian, I can go along with him: But when he makes St. *Paul* to argue, Secondly, *Ab absurdo*, that if *their Marriage and Cohabitation be lawful, therefore a Divorce would be contrary to the Law of Christ, and bastardizes their Children*: Here I doubt he perverts St. *Paul*'s Sense in many respects; for, as I have hinted above.

1. St. *Paul* does not say in this Case, *that a Seperation would be contrary to the Law of Christ.* So far from it, that he does not determine it by God's Law, but by his own Opinion. *V.* 12. *But to the rest speak I, but not the Lord, If any Brother hath a Wife that believeth not*, &c.

2. He is so far from declaring their Seperation to be a Sin, and *such a Sin as Bastardizes the Children*, that he only gives his Advice in case both Parties agree to Cohabit. *If she be pleased to dwell with him*, V. 12. *and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him*, V. 13. But if they disagree about Religion, they may part, *If the Unbelieving depart, let him depart. A Brother or Sister is not in Bondage in such Cases*, V. 15.

3. As I have prov'd, that the Question was not about the Validity of Marriage, but of the Lawfulness and Expedience of their Cohabitation: So Mr. *A*—'s Legitimacy puts such a Consequence on St. *Paul*'s Assertion, as does by no means follow; for it is only the Invalidity of Marriage that Bastardizes the Children, but Divorce alone does not.

In a Word, Mr. *A*—'s Sense of St. *Paul*'s Words makes St. *Paul* to contradict himself; for it makes him to declare such a Seperation contrary to God's Law, and injurious to the Children, in the 14th Verse, which it is plain, that in the 15th he consents to; and which in the 12th he says, he did not determine by the Autority of God's Laws, but only by his own Autority.

But taking the Holiness of Children in our Sense, for admitting them to Baptism, it makes the Apostle's Argument strong and clear: For the Holiness of Children born in such a State, is a very good Proof, that their Cohabitation was Lawful and Innocent. 'Tis as much as if St. *Paul* had

had ſaid; *As to the Caſe of thoſe married to Unbelievers, the Practice of the Church in the Admiſſion of the Children of ſuch to Baptiſm, as well as the Children of thoſe Parents who are both Chriſtians ſhow what our Opinion is of their Cohabitation: The Unbeliever is Sanctified in this reſpect by the Believer; elſe were the Children of ſuch common and unclean, like the Children of Infidels; but now are they holy,* or in *Malachi*'s Phraſe, *an holy Seed*, and admitted into the Covenant of God in Chriſt by Baptiſm; as well as the Children of thoſe Parents who are both Believers.

I profeſs with Sincerity, that I cannot find out any other Senſe of the Place that will agree with the Apoſtle's Scope and Deſign. And when it thus appears, that after Mens Sedulous Endeavours to evade the Teſtimony of this Place, their Objections are of no Force, nor can any other Conſtruction be deviſed, that will well agree with the Scripture-Phraſe, and be conſiſtent with the Scope and Deſign of St. *Paul*'s Determination in this Caſe: Methinks it adds very great Autority to my Argument, makes the Force of it much more conſiderable; and muſt be admitted as a good Proof that Infants were baptized in St. *Paul*'s Time.

But the Thing now in Debate, being whether it was the Apoſtles Practice to baptize Infants: I think it will be very proper to ſhow what early Diſcoveries we have of it in the Writings of the Primitive Fathers. For let Men that are Conſcious of the Teſtimony of Antiquity againſt them never ſo much decry the Autority of the Fathers, and the Primitive Church; and tell us, that *the Myſtery of Iniquity began to work in it very early*; nothing of that ſhould derogate from their juſt Eſteem. The Myſtery of Iniquity began to work in St. *Paul*'s Time, and yet, I hope, that does not leſſen his Autority. So neither do all the Hereſies, and Hæterodox Opinions of the firſt Ages derogate from the Autority of the Fathers. in that they proceeded from Men out of the Communion of the Church; and were oppoſed by the Fathers, with that Vigor, Conſtancy, and Zeal; which makes their Teſtimony, both in Doctrines and Practice, highly to be valued.

For this Reaſon, I ſay, it is remarkable how early we find plain, and undeniable Evidence of the Baptiſm of Infants. From the Death of St. *John* for ſome Years we have no Chriſtian Writings extant, except a few ſhort Epiſtles. In which we can no more expect a particular Account of all Apoſtolical Practices; than, as I ſaid before, we can hope for a particular Hiſtory of the firſt Ages of the World in the firſt Five Chapters of *Geneſis*.

But one of the firſt of the Fathers that wrote in any conſiderable Bulk, was *Irenæus*, and his Evidence is very expreſs in this Caſe: For he has theſe Words; *Omnes enim venit* (viz. *Chriſtus*) *per ſemet ipſum ſalvare: Omnes,*

nes, inquam, qui per eum renaſcuntur in Deum, Infantes, & Parvulos, & Pueros, & Juvenes, & Seniores. Ideo per omnem venit ætatem, & Infantibus factus Infans, ſanctificans Infantes, in Parvulis Parvulus, Sanctificans hanc ipſam habentes ætatem, Adv. Hær. lib. 2. c. 39. The Deſign of the Father in this Place, was to lay open the Fantaſtic Conceits of the *Valentinians*, who pretended that their *Æons* were prefigured by the Years of Chriſt's Life before his Baptiſm; and that what they dreamt of the Paſſion of the Twelfth *Æon*, was ſignified by Chriſt's Suffering the Twelfth Month; to ſupport which Notion, they aſſerted that Chriſt Preached but one Year after his Baptiſm.

Theſe were the Heretic's Fantaſtic Dreams; to confute which, *Irenæus* firſt ſhows that Chriſt was at *Jeruſalem* Three ſeveral Paſſovers after his Baptiſm; and conſequently muſt have Preach'd above one Year, in that he begun it upon his Baptiſm, and continued it to his Death.

Then he ſhows, that Chriſt paſſed thro' the ſeveral Stages of Humane Life; *Omnem ætatem ſanctificans per illam quæ ad ipſam erat ſimilitudinem*, that *he might ſanctifie every Age by his own Likeneſs thereto: For*, ſays he, *he came to ſave all by himſelf; all I mean that are regenerated by him to God; Infants, Little Ones, Children, Young Men, and Old. For this Reaſon he paſs'd thro' every Age, and to the Infants he became an Infant, ſanctifying the Infants; and to the Little Ones, a Little One that he might ſanctifie thoſe of that Age.* Which Words were purpoſely deſigned to declare, that the Salvation purchaſed by Chriſt belongs to all Ages or Years whatever, whether Infants or Old Men, who are Members of Chriſt's Church. *Omnes qui per eum renaſcuntur in Deum*; all that are *Regenerate*, or *born again to God by him:* Which is the very Expreſſion that St. *Paul*, and the Ancients after him, uſe for Baptiſm. And it appears here to be added, to put a Limitation to the Aſſertion; that what he ſays he means peculiarly of Chriſtians, that have been by Baptiſm admitted into the Covenant. *All that are born again unto God by him; Infants, Babes, Children*, &c. nor are Infants capable of being born again unto God by Chriſt, any other way, that I know of, but by Baptiſm.

Tit. 3. 5. See *Juſt. Mart.* Apol. 2. p. 94. Edit. Par.

So that I do not ſee how it can be evaded, but that this ſingle Evidence muſt be acknowledg'd a ſufficient Proof, that the baptizing Infants was a Thing in Practice when *Irenæus* wrote this Book: For otherwiſe this Aſſertion could be neither pertinent, nor proper.

It may not therefore be amiſs to ſhow how early this was, and how very improbable it is, that ſuch a Cuſtom ſhould ſo ſoon prevail; unleſs it had been received by a certain Tradition from the Apoſtles them-

themſelves. *Irenæus* wrote this Book about *A. D.* CLXXX, which was but about Fourſcore Years from the Death of St. *John*, who died in the Third Year of *Trajan* (i. e.) about *A. D.* 100. And *Irenæus* was ſo far Cotemporary with *Polycarp*, who was *a Diſciple of the Apoſtles, and convers'd with many of thoſe who had ſeen Chriſt, and by them was made Biſhop of* Smyrna, *in* Aſia: That he ſays, he had ſeen him, ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ ἡμῶν ἡλικίᾳ, *when he himſelf was but a young Man.* He muſt write this Book then in the very next Age after one that had been Contemporary with the Apoſtles. And this I think is very early.

Biſhop *Pearſon*, *Op. Poſthuma.* Diſ. 2. c. 14.

Iren. l. 3. c. 3.

It can hardly be ſuppoſed that any corrupt Practice ſhould be introduc'd, but *Polycarp*; who was *Inſtructed by the Apoſtles, and taught what he had learnt of the Apoſtles, and what the Church had delivered to him, and what alone was true*, as *Irenæus* ſpeaks of him: Would zealouſly have oppoſed it, and have had Autority to reject it. There is no Probability that any great Innovation ſhould be introduc'd while a Cotemporary and Diſciple of the Apoſtles was yet alive. There is then only from the Death of *Polycarp* to *Irenæus*'s writing this Book, for the introducing this Practice, if it was introduced. And that, at moſt, is but about Thirty Two, or Thirty Three Years. For Biſhop *Pearſon*, who places the Martyrdom of *Polycarp* earlier than other Men, aſſerts, that it was *A. D.* CXLVII. And can it be thought that any great Innovation ſhould be made in *Irenæus*'s own Time, and he either not know it, or not reprove it? Can thoſe who think the baptizing Infants ſuch a *Corruption*, ſuch a *Violation of Chriſt's Inſtitution as*, they conceit, to *deſtroy the true Being of a Church*; *to deprive the Miniſters of God of all juſt Power of Miniſtring in holy Things*; *and to make Communion with us, in our Sacraments, unlawful*: Can they, I ſay, imagine that thoſe Fathers whoſe Glory it was to do all Things according to the *Inſtructions of the Apoſtles*; ſhould ſuffer ſuch an heinous Innovation to come in among them, and be received; and never make any Complaint, nor any Oppoſition to it? Would not *Polycarp*, who was *Inſtructed of the Apoſtles themſelves*, have oppoſed it, had it been in his Time? And would not *Irenæus*, who ſays, that *only thoſe Things are true, which the Church from the Apoſtles delivered*; would not he, I ſay, zealouſly have oppos'd it, had it been in his Time? When therefore we find him ſpeaking of it as a known Practice, I appeal to all impartial Men, whether it is not Rational to believe that the Fathers, and the Primitive Church receiv'd it from the Apoſtles themſelves.

Lib. 3. *Cap.* 3.

Opera. Poſthuma. Diſ. 2. c. 20.

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You ought then, *Sir*, to be very tender in Charging all Christians from the Apostles Times for Fifteen Hundred Years together; with *not being a lawful Church, nor such, with whom one may Lawfully hold Communion in the Sacraments.* This should not be done without very good Proof. Other Errors and Corruptions that have been found fault with, and wanted Reformation; we know when, and how they were introduced. And before this is so Positively affirmed to be a corrupt Innovation, you ought to show us, about what Time, and by what Means it came to prevail; rather than decry the Autority of the Fathers that bear Witness to this as an Apostolical Practice.

I might confirm this from the Testimony of others, and particularly of *Tertullian* in the next Place; who altho' he seems not, I confess, to approve it, as he was in many Things particular in his Judgment; yet even in his Dislike he undeniably attests that it was then in Use. But the Testimony of Antiquity has been sufficiently insisted on by others. I shall therefore add no more, but leave it to your self to consider, and to the World to judge; whether your separating from our Communion upon the Account of a Practice so agreeable to Christ's Institution, and the Ancient Usage of the Church, be not more owing to the Prejudice of Education, than to the Force of Reason, or the just Merits of the Cause. I am

SIR, *your Humble Servant.*

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

PAg. 2. l. 30. read *enjoys.* p. 6. l. 19. r. *Capacity.* l. 34. dele *first.* p. 13. l. 28. r. *really.* p. 15. l. 1. r. *assert.* p. 16. l. 26. r. *at all.* p. 17. l. 15. dele ? p. 24. l. 10. after *Wife*, add, (*i. e.*) *the Sanctimony of the Conjugal State is attested.*

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

A DISCOURSE of FORNICATION: Shewing the Greatness of that *Sin*; and Examining the Excuses pleaded for it from the Examples of Ancient Times. To which is added, an Appendix, concerning *Concubinage*; As also a Remark on Mr. *Butler*'s Explication of *Heb.* 13. 4. in his late Book on that Subject. By *John Turner*, M. A. Printed for *John Wyat*, at the *Rose*, in St. *Paul*'s Church-yard.

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